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I.—*Memoir of the Life and Writings of St. NIERSES CLAJENSIS, surnamed the Graceful, Pontiff of Armenia.* By JOHANNES AVDALL.

[Submitted to the Asiatic Society, 1st May, 1829*.]

At a period when Armenia was labouring under the lamentable effects of intestine broils and foreign invasions ; when she was subjected to the ruinous consequences of dissensions that existed between the leaders of the Armenian and Greek Churches, when tyranny and persecution of the most violent kind strode hand in hand in her territories, Providence deemed it necessary, out of sympathy for the sufferings of human beings, to raise up a person, who, by a happy combination of the qualities of a great mind, with those of a good heart, might be a proper instrument of knitting more closely man to man, and of removing disturbances from the Church of Christ, whose very essence is formed of love, meekness, and peace.

The individual, in whom the illustrious subject of this Memoir found a father, was called APIRAT, a prince famed for uncommon bravery and glorious achievements, who flourished in Armenia near the close of the eleventh century. He claimed his origin from the Pehlavic race, and had the happiness of perpetuating his memory by giving birth to four sons, known under the appellations of BASIL, SHAHAN, GREGORY,

* This paper was handed to us by a Member of the Committee of Papers of the Asiatic Society for 1829, on his departure for the Cape. It had been unfortunately mislaid among his papers. Although, (as the author's presentation letter says,) "it is not of a scientific nature, and consequently little adapted to the taste of the present age," still, considering that it is descriptive of the public acts of the greatest author and divine that flourished in Asia in the middle of the 12th century, and illustrative of the religious differences that separate the Church of Armenia from that of Greece, it cannot fail to interest many of our readers.—ED.

and NIERSES. The latter was born in the year 1100, in the castle of ZOVs, which was the hereditary property of APIRAT. Allied by the ties of consanguinity to GREGORY VIKAYASER*, who then wielded the pontifical sceptre in Armenia, APIRAT entrusted to him the education of GREGORY and NIERSES, who were, by the direction of their guardian, admitted into the monastery raised on the summit of the Black Mountain. GREGORY VIKAYASER, when he had attained to a good old age, was by the repeated solicitations of the prince BASIL the Sly, and his illustrious lady, induced to change the place of his residence, and spend the remainder of his days near them, at Rapan, situated in the vicinity of the city of Cheson. On his departure from the monastery of the Black Mountain, he took with him his wards, GREGORY and NIERSES, having entertained favourable anticipations of their future greatness and celebrity. Some time after his having eventually settled in the Red Convent, near Cheson, perceiving that his career was daily drawing to a close, he sent for PARSICK, whom he had previously nominated his successor, and for BASIL the Sly, to whose kind care and protection he intrusted the lads GREGORY and NIERSES, the former being of the age of about 13 years, and the latter only 10 years, old. He also added, in the presence of those by whom he was surrounded, that, agreeably to his nomination, PARSICK should immediately after his death be invested with the pontifical authority of Armenia. On the elevation of the latter to that high station, he began to shew the greatest regard for the welfare and education of his wards, GREGORY and NIERSES, and accordingly placed them under the superintendance of Bishop STEPHEN, a divine of high attainments and profound erudition, in order, that they might by his immediate tuition be instructed in theology and the literature of the west. GREGORY and NIERSES continued to proceed in their education with two other fellow scholars, named SARKIES† and IGNATIUS, whose valuable productions have perpetuated their fame in the recollection of posterity.

* Vikayaser (Վիկայասեր) is the compound of Վիկայ martyr, and սեր love, signifying *lover of martyrs*, which is an epithet given to GREGORY in consequence of the extreme veneration which he displayed for the memory of martyrs, and the great avidity with which he translated their lives from the Greek and Syriac languages.

† These two worthies are peculiarly distinguished among the divines, who flourished in Armenia in the twelfth century. At the special desire of the pontiff GREGORY, IGNATIUS wrote a commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke, which is held in general admiration for the perspicuity of its style and the sensible observations with which it abounds. SARKIES claims an equal share of veneration from his countrymen for his valuable productions, which have been handed down to us. They consist of Commentaries on the seven General Epistles, on

PARSICK having established the seat of his pontificate at the desert of Shughr, in the vicinage of Cheson, felt great interest in frequently visiting the Red Convent, in order that his occasional presence might enhance the utility and efficiency of the institution. Two years after this, considering that the qualifications and good conduct of GREGORY were worthy of sacerdotal dignity, PARSICK conferred on him the order of priesthood, when he had just attained the age of 15 years. Removed from the Red Convent, GREGORY remained with PARSICK in the pontifical house, where the latter with paternal care and exertions instilled into the mind of the former such principles of virtuous habits and sound doctrine, as might befit him for the high office which he was destined to fill.

Having enjoyed the pontifical authority for about eight years, PARSICK was cut off by sudden death. Before, however, this melancholy event, he summoned the dignitaries of the church of Armenia, as well as some of the nobility of the country, and in their presence, nominated his ward GREGORY as successor to the pontificate, presenting him with his pontifical robes and sceptre. Accordingly, the bishops and clergy of the nation having assembled in the Red Convent, anointed GREGORY with great honors Pontiff of all Armenia. Though of the age of twenty years only, the mental and moral qualities of GREGORY peculiarly adapted him for the responsibility of the high situation.

GREGORY having, by new improvements, strongly fortified the castle of Zovs, which had devolved on him after the death of his father, removed thither the seat of his spiritual government. After the lapse of several years, NIERSES, at the particular desire of his brother GREGORY, quitted his monastic seclusion, and entered into clerical orders. During the ceremonies of his ordination, the pontiff GREGORY bestowed on him the appellation of NIERSES, in veneration of the memory of NIERSES the Great*, who was of Parthian and Pehlavic extraction. By what name he was originally designated, no mention is made in the works of any of our historians. His profound learning and exemplary virtues soon raised him to the high dignity of a bishop, in whose capacity he was from time to time sent by the pontiff on visitations to the most populous provinces of Armenia, for the purpose of enlightening the minds of the ignorant, and pouring the balm of comfort into the hearts of the afflicted. Wherever he visited, his footsteps were marked with the Prayers of St. GREGORIUS NAREKENSIS, and on the Prophecy of ISAIAH. That of the General Epistles was published in Constantinople in the year 1744; but those of the two latter have not as yet been discovered.

* For particulars of the life of NIERSES the Great, vide my translation of the History of Armenia, vol. i. page 181.

national improvements and spiritual good. By his peculiarly mild temper and upright principles, he was held in general estimation, and considered a very valuable member of the fraternity to which he belonged.

At this period, it must be recollected, the city of Antioch was in the possession of the Latins, who found it necessary to convene a general assembly for the purpose of taking into consideration some heavy charges that were preferred against RODOLPH, the Archbishop of that city, to his holiness INNOCENT the Second. Being deservedly distinguished among foreigners for the intense zeal they displayed both in the cause of Christianity and humanity, the pontiff of Armenia and his brother NIERSES were invited to become participators in the proceedings of the council. They met with a very honourable reception from the Latins, whose admiration of the graceful tone of their conversation could only be equalled by the surprise with which they caught every sentiment which fell from the lips of those bright ornaments of the Armenian church. On the conclusion of the meeting, which led to the deposition of RODOLPH from his episcopal dignity, the pontiff GREGORY went on a pilgrimage to the city of Jerusalem, and his brother NIERSES having returned to the castle of Zovs, performed the duties of a proxy during the absence of his brother from the seat of his pontificate.

Dissensions now arose among the Armenians and Syrians residing in some part of Mesopotamia, through the dissemination of the heretical doctrines of the Thondrakian sect*, which were calculated to mislead the simple and the illiterate. THULKURAN, an Armenian nobleman, eminently distinguished for his exemplary piety and benevolence, viewed the progress of these heresies with great apprehensions for the safety of the established Church of Armenia, and in consequence, endeavoured to check the evil, by communicating the state of things to the pontiff GREGORY, and soliciting him to take measures for effectually exterminating the sect. The latter, after giving the subject due consideration, communicated with his brother NIERSES on the best way of pro-

* The founder of this sect was an Armenian by the name of SUMBAT, who flourished in Armenia in the beginning of the ninth century. He was born in Zarehavan, a village situated in the province of Zalcotin; but in consequence of his long residence in Thondrak, he received the appellation of Thondrakensis, and his followers were known by that of Thondrakians. His mind was imbued with the heretical principles of the Paulicians, and the whole course of his life was marked with the greatest moral depravity, impiety, and wickedness. Like the Sadducees, he disbelieved the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, and in imitation of the opinions of EPICURUS denied that God was the creator and preserver of the world. He refused his assent to the creed of the graces of the Holy Ghost, the efficacy of the Sacraments of the Church, and the existence of sin, laws, and justice.

tecting the Church from the impending danger, and imposed upon him the task of addressing a general letter to the Armenian inhabitants of Mesopotamia, descriptive of the confession of the orthodox faith of the Armenian Church, and contradictory of the heterodox opinions of the Thondrakians. NIERSES performed the injunctions of his brother in such a successful manner, as to silence those who were inimically disposed towards the Church, and to restore peace and unanimity amongst the community of that place.

In the year 1142, the Grecian emperor JOHANNES PORPHYRIGENITUS led a considerable army into the country of Cilicia, in order to put down the power of the Scythians, which had already begun to assume a formidable appearance in that quarter. During his short stay in the city of Anarzaba, the emperor expressed a desire of having an interview with the Armenian pontiff GREGORY and his brother NIERSES. On their being presented to the emperor, they met with a kind reception, and were seated next to his imperial majesty. A conversation then ensued relative to the doctrines and ceremonies of the Armenian Church, and the sound judgment with which they answered the interrogations of the emperor, excited his regard and admiration. This afforded him a favourable opportunity of acquiring a correct notion of the state of the Armenian Church, and of removing from his mind that unjust prejudice with which he was in the habit of viewing the Armenians. The example of their monarch was soon followed by the majority of the people, who began to relax in the persecution with which they afflicted a nation whom by a common faith they ought to have protected from similar cruelties, when inflicted by the unbelieving Musulmáns.

Apprehensive, through the perturbed state of the country, of an attack upon his paternal castle of Zovs by foreign invaders, the pontiff GREGORY consulted his safety by quitting the place of his residence, and fixing the seat of his pontificate in the fortress of Hiramcla. Built on the confluence of the rivers Marzman and Euphrates, and strongly fortified by nature, Hiramcla proved an insuperable bar against an invasion. Formerly it was in the possession of the prince BASIL the Sly, and now it was under the control of the countess JOSCELYN. The pontiff GREGORY and his brother NIERSES met with a very hospitable reception from this illustrious lady, who felt the greatest delight in rendering their situation comfortable, and was exceedingly pleased with their charming and edifying conversation.

On the decease of her husband, who had been seized by NOURED-DIN*, the chief of Aleppo, and who died in confinement, the dowager countess JOSCELYN thought it safe to quit Hiramcla for Europe.

* MILLS's History of the Crusades, vol. i. p. 309.

Previously, however, to her departure, she made over the management of the fortress to the pontiff GREGORY and his brother NIERSES on the following condition: "I am about to quit this place," said she, "and proceed to my country. I leave this fortress as a trust in your hands, with a desire that in case my son happen to come to this quarter, you shall deliver it over to him as his patrimonial property; but if otherwise, you shall be entitled to its possession." On the arrival of young JOSCELYN in Hiromcla, he was made master of it in conformity with the desire of his mother. After a short residence in this place, JOSCELYN determined to quit it for Europe. In consequence of this intention, the fortress was sold to the Armenian pontiff GREGORY, who, according to the historians VARDAN and KIRAKUS, established in it the seat of his pontifical government, and raised there a very magnificent Church, embellished with splendid cupolas.

About the year 1165, when GREGORY had attained to a good old age, and enjoyed the pontifical office for a period of 53 years, he began to be solicitous for the nomination of a successor. He expressed a desire of conferring that spiritual dignity on his brother NIERSES, who was also past the meridian of life. The latter, though the offer was several times made to him by GREGORY, was unwilling to accept it. Finally, anticipating the approach of his death, GREGORY ordered a general meeting of all the Armenian bishops, monks, and priests to be held in the pontifical house at Hiromcla, for the purpose of considering the best mode of nominating a successor to the pontificate. In this assembly, after making an impressive speech on the approaching termination of his career, and the necessity of electing a successor worthy of the high station which he filled, he expressed his choice of investing his brother NIERSES with the pontifical authority, which proposition met with the unanimous and cordial approbation of the audience. NIERSES, who had made up his mind to exchange the troubles of a busy life for the sweets of solitude, in vain endeavoured to decline the offer of that responsible situation. Overcome by the repeated solicitations of the assembly, he was at last obliged to accept the office of the pontificate, with a view of promoting the general welfare of the nation. Immediately after this, GREGORY anointed NIERSES pontiff of all Armenia, and adorned him with the pontifical robes. He placed in his hand the sceptre of authority, and saluted him with the greatest reverence and submission as the head of the Church. When the ceremonies of the election were over, NIERSES rose and delivered a most excellent speech, expressive of his acknowledgments for the high honor that had been conferred on him, and descriptive of the nature of the responsible duties which he was bound to perform in the spiritual dignity to which he

was elevated. By this oration the audience were not only assured of the zeal and interest which he would feel for the welfare of his flock, but were also struck with a forcible conviction of the goodness of the heart and the grandeur of the mind, from which these graceful sentiments emanated. It was owing to a peculiarly sweet tone of his expressions, and a remarkably fascinating flow of the sentiments of his inspired mind, that he was distinguished by the appellation of the Graceful, Հնորհալի, as he was latterly known by the cognomen of CLAJENSIS, Կլայեցի in consequence of exercising the functions of his sacerdotal office in the fortress of Hiromcla. About three months after the election of NIERSES, his brother GREGORY departed this life *Anno Domini* 1166, and was entombed in a sepulchre prepared during his life time.

Soon after the death of his brother, NIERSES, the pontiff, set about improving the state of the churches, and promoting the spiritual welfare of his flock. And as the Armenians in that time, like those in our days, were dispersed in various parts of the globe, that is to say, in the territories of Armenia, in Greece, Persia, Georgia, Aluans, Egypt, and other quarters, he found it essentially necessary to extend spiritual comforts even to his distant congregation, by sending to them pious and able missionaries, for the purpose of curing the wounds of the afflicted, and enlightening the minds of the ignorant. Not contented with the good that was likely to result from the zealous exertions of these preachers of the gospel, he, at the early part of his pontificate, and by the unanimous consent of his bishops, addressed a general epistle at great length to the people of his Church, which was couched in sentiments full of heavenly wisdom*. In this letter, after mentioning the death of his brother GREGORY, and taking a short view of the relative duties imposed upon him by his being elevated to the pontifical throne, he states the orthodox creed of the Church of Armenia, which is immediately followed by preceptive exhortations best adapted to persons of every age and rank. The letter itself is divided into different sections, the first of which is directed to conventuals, who are assimilated to the stars; the second, to the primates of monasteries, who are compared to the eyes; the third, to the bishops, who are likened to the head, countenance, and stewards; the fourth, to the priests, who are made to resemble parents; the fifth, to the nobility; the sixth, to the military order; the seventh, to the citizens; the eighth, to the husbandmen and peasantry; and the ninth, to the female sex in general. The immediate object of the writer was to excite a love of virtue and piety amongst his congregation, and to be instrumental in eradicating from their

* This pastoral epistle was published in Venice with a Latin translation in the year 1829.

minds such unwholesome principles, as are calculated to render human nature waste and deformed. There are also extant several epistles written by NIERSES to different individuals, about matters temporal and spiritual, amongst which his correspondence with the authorities of Greece, relative to the contemplated union of the Greek and Armenian Churches, claims pre-eminence. Of this I shall have occasion to give a detailed account in the following pages :

The attention of NIERSES the Graceful was chiefly engrossed by a fervent desire of introducing various useful plans of improvement into the Church of Armenia. He succeeded in his endeavours of reforming it from the remnants of those irregularities, which were some of the baleful consequences of foreign invasions, and which were still predominant in several parts of Armenia. He strove with great vigilance to restore to the Church that splendour, which it enjoyed during the glorious reign of the Christian kings of Armenia. He ordered old copies of the Prayer Book of the Armenian Church to be brought to him from various distinguished monasteries of Armenia major, and by a careful comparison of their contents, he modelled the liturgy with considerable improvements, which is to this day in general use amongst all the Armenians. He made several additions to the Prayers that were read on Good Friday and the Pentecost. According to the authority of MUKHITHAR, the pontiff, it appears that up to the time of NIERSES the Graceful, the Church of Armenia performed the ordination of priests and bishops conformably to the custom and ceremonies of the Greek Church ; but NIERSES, on his elevation to the pontifical throne, adopted a new mode of ordination, not materially different from those of the sister Churches.

Prior to the beginning of the twelfth century, poetry was a perfect blank in Armenian literature. Though metrical pieces and songs can be traced in our history to have been repeated and sung by the Armenians in different periods, yet no record is handed down to us as to the existence of regular poetry in the Armenian language. According to a faithful writer* of that time, great credit is due to NIERSES the

* NIERSES LAMBRONENSIS, a contemporary and relation of NIERSES the Graceful, pays a handsome and just tribute to his genius, learning, and virtues in a poetical panegyric which he composed on him shortly after his death. In alluding to the honor due to him for his being the first who introduced poetry into the Armenian language, the panegyrist writes thus :

Հոմէրական տաղից չափօղ.	“ Who first with grace Homeric numbers strung,
Ստանաւոր տառից գտօղ.	And touchingly in fair Armenia sung,
’ի հոգևորսն զնոյն տռօղ.	His verses soothe and elevate the soul,
Որո՞վ զսիրտս կարծըր ճմլօղ :	And bend our stubborn hearts to their control.”

Graceful as the first poetic writer in Armenia, whose talented productions have deservedly gained him the title of the Prince of Armenian Poets. Gifted by nature with a great genius, NIERSES devoted his leisure to the composition of melodies, anthems, and hymns, which are to this day sung in our Church to the admiration of all. Some of these poetical pieces are acrostic, the first letters of the stanzas composing the name of the author or the entire alphabet of the Armenian language. He also wrote several treatises and panegyrics, both in prose and verse, on dominical feasts, patriarchs, martyrs, and angels. During the days of his priesthood, he composed a brief history of Armenia in verse, from the period of HAIC to the twelfth century. A variety of miscellaneous pieces are also extant by this author, several of which he wrote before his elevation to the pontifical throne. At the express desire of his nephew APIRAT, he produced in verse a pathetic Elegy on the destruction of the devoted city of Edessa by the victorious army of ZENGI, the chief of Aleppo, which memorable event took place on the 23rd of December, 1144*. This little work, which abounds with vivid descriptions and patriotic feelings, was for the first time published at Madras in the year 1810. Another edition of it was lately published by the Asiatic Society of Paris. The European public may shortly expect an English translation of it, which I have undertaken to execute†. On his being raised to the dignity of a bishop NIERSES produced another excellent work entitled ՅԻ ՈՐԿԻ “Jesus the Son‡,” which is a poetical description of the principal events that are recorded in the Old and New Testaments. During this time he composed that admirable prayer which commences with “I confess with faith,” Հաւատով խոստովանիմ, and which is now so popular amongst the generality of the Armenians. It consists of twenty-four verses, typical of the twenty-four hours of the day, and the number of the books of prophecy. Regarding this prayer, the author says in the records of old manuscripts, “I have written this in a plain and easy style, that it should be intelligible to general readers.” It is held in such great estimation by my countrymen, that a translation of it into twenty-four languages was published in the year 1823 by the Mukhi-tharian Society in Venice! NIERSES was not unaware of the benefit of combining *utile dulci* in the variety of his literary productions. He

* MILLS's History of the Crusades, vol. i. p. 307.

† The Armenian text was published at Calcutta in 1832. The translation has not yet appeared.—ED.

‡ This work is very popular with the Armenian literati, and has run through several editions, the latest of which was published at Venice in the year 1830.

wrote several entertaining fables and pleasing enigmas, with a view of affording to his countrymen a source of innocent pleasure of the mind. Besides those already enumerated, he produced several other little works, which, like many valuable antiquities, have not escaped the devouring jaws of time.

The fame of the sanctity and wisdom of NIERSES the Graceful having spread through various countries of the globe, many distinguished individuals addressed him letters comprising questions on the most difficult points of religion, which he answered with such skill as to carry conviction to the mind of every reasonable being. At the special desire of VARDAN, one of the venerable monks of the convent of Haghbat, he undertook writing a commentary of a sublime panegyric on the Holy Cross, the production of David the philosopher, distinguished by the cognomen of the Invincible. When the work was completed and presented to VARDAN, he highly admired the profound learning and the inspired sentiments with which it abounded. There are also a few philosophical treatises extant in our language, which some of our historians attribute to the pen of this bright luminary of the Armenian Church.

Great intimacy existed between NIERSES and GEORGIUS, primate of the convent of Haghbat, who was eminently distinguished for his piety and rectitude of conduct. The latter, who held a constant communication with the former, solicited him in a letter to use his endeavours to procure a copy of the Memoirs of ST. SARKIES the General. NIERSES succeeded in obtaining the work, which was written in the Syrian language. He ordered it to be translated into Armenian by a Syrian priest, named MICHAEL, who was tolerably conversant with the Armenian language. This translation was subsequently revised by NIERSES in the year 1156, while he was a bishop. A copy of this work, written in Hiramclia, in the year 1198, about twenty-five years after the death of NIERSES, is preserved in the library of the Mukhitharian Society at Venice. Annexed to this work, which appears to have been transcribed from the manuscript of NIERSES himself, is a commentary of the general Epistles of St. JAMES, St. PETER, St. JOHN, and St. JUDE, written in a concise and comprehensive style, and compiled from the works of Greek and Syriac theologians, whose names are specified. But who was the compiler of this work is not known, as no mention is made of him in the old records. In another copy of the same, which was written in the year 1335 at the convent of St. THADDEUS, situated in the province of Artaz, the compilation of the work is attributed by the transcriber to NIERSES. This is, however, a mere conjecture, for it can be clearly perceived from the style that it is not the production of

NIERSES. Perhaps a transcript made by him from the original was left in the pontifical house at Hiromela.

In the evening of his life, NIERSES commenced writing a commentary on the Gospel of St. MATTHEW. He had performed it as far as "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil," when the termination of his earthly career put a stop to its completion. After the lapse of a considerable time, it was finished by JOHANNES ZORZERENSIS. There is another work by the talented NIERSES, which was intended as a guide for monastic life, and which he wrote while he enjoyed the dignity of priesthood. The profound learning which characterises his writings, the peculiarly beautiful style in which they are composed, and the divine spirit of benevolence which pervades every page of his compositions, are convincing proofs that the author of them was endowed with a mind of most extraordinary powers, and filled with divine inspiration. His voluminous lucubrations, which have been handed down to us by the unanimous applause of past generations, are highly creditable both to his head and heart as a man, a patriot, a divine, and a philosopher. Few can rise from the perusal of his works without being moved by feelings of reverence and admiration for the greatness of the mind from which they have emanated. NIERSES LAMBRONENSIS, the grandson of General SHAHAN, the brother of NIERSES the Graceful, who was one of his distinguished contemporaries, and had many opportunities of personally experiencing his mental and moral qualities, pays a just tribute to the memory of this paragon of learning in a poetical panegyric which minutely treats of the many amiable virtues with which he was adorned. The panegyrist properly dwells on the meritorious exertions, which NIERSES the Graceful made to promote the public good, on his exemplary piety and devotion, his rigid and abstemious habits, his continual studies and philosophical reflections, and the warm sympathies with which his heart glowed in relieving the distress of the poor, the orphan, the widow, the sick, the captive, and others who were doomed to suffer miseries and calamities.

During the pontificate of NIERSES the Graceful, there still appeared in some parts of Armenia remnants of a peculiar tribe of Armenians, known under the appellation of Արևորդիք AREVORDIES*, (the Sons of

* This people had probably derived their mode of worship from the ancient Persians, and perfectly agreed in the tenets of the Guebres of the present day. They adhered to the doctrines of ZERDASHT or ZOROASTER, who considered the sun as the grand receptacle of fire, and placed the existence of the Deity in the fiery element spread over all the universe.

the Sun,) who had continued in their ancestral superstitions, and not deviated from paying homage to the sun since the days of GREGORY the Illuminator, the second Apostle of Armenia. Through the zealous exertions of the Armenian missionaries, whom the pontiff NIERSES sent to different quarters of the country, the darkness of paganism, that had so long overhung the heads of these unbelievers, gradually began to vanish, and after the lapse of a few years, the whole of that tribe embraced Christianity, and were admitted into the fellowship of the Church of Armenia.

Contemporary with NIERSES the Graceful, there was in Armenia MUKHITHAR, an assiduous follower of ÆSCULAPIUS, and eminently distinguished for his Medical and Astronomical knowledge. He had the gratification of cultivating the friendship of NIERSES, from whose conversation he derived the greatest delight and spiritual comfort. At the particular request of this celebrated naturalist, NIERSES wrote a beautiful poem, descriptive of the beauties and excellencies of heavenly bodies. He added to it another small poem on the Creation of the World, and the mystery of the incarnation of our Saviour*. The latter is acrostic, the first letters of the verses of it composing this sentence Մխիթար բժիշկ՝ ընկալ 'ի ներսէսէ զայս բան: " Doctor MUKHITHAR, accept from NIERSES this poem!" I hope it will not be considered here out of place to say, that this learned physician has left a very valuable work on Medicine, which is replete with wise observations and useful experiments. It was composed during the time, and by the desire, of GREGORY the pontiff, the successor of NIERSES the Graceful†.

One of the most remarkable actions that marked the earthly career of NIERSES the Graceful, was the contemplated union of the Armenian and Greek Churches. This desirable object, which originated from a most unexpected event, was undertaken during the life time of his brother GREGORY, the pontiff, and prior to his being invested with the supremacy of the Church of Armenia. But alas for the peace of Christianity! before the laudable undertaking was carried into execution, both Armenia and Greece were unexpectedly deprived of the only instruments by which such a happy change possibly could have been effected!

During the last days of the pontificate of GREGORY, dissensions arose between the two Armenian princes, THOROSE the Great Panse-

* These two little poems are also published in conjunction with the work called 'Jesus the Son.'

† This rare Manuscript work was discovered in the Royal Library of Paris, and published in Venice two years ago.

bastus and Lord of Cilicia, and OSHIN the Sebastus and Lord of Lambron. The reason of this unfortunate difference was, that the former insisted upon the latter to profess obedience to himself, and to decline becoming tributary to the Greeks, while OSHIN thought it safer to continue his allegiance to the Greek emperor, than to acknowledge the ascendancy of THOROSE. Blinded by selfishness, and provoked by mutual resistance, they were at last necessitated to have recourse to an appeal to arms, which was attended with fatal consequences to both parties.

The pontiff GREGORY, viewing these unfortunate circumstances with a spirit of national sympathy, imposed upon his brother NIERSES the task of effecting a reconciliation between the two princes by his mild and fascinating address. NIERSES succeeded in his endeavours of restoring to them peace and friendship, which were soon after followed by a happy alliance between them, THOROSE marrying his daughter to HETHUM, the son of OSHIN. On the celebration of this marriage, OSHIN desired NIERSES to accompany him to Lambron, with a view that its inhabitants might be benefitted by his edifying instructions and evangelical discourses. During their journey they had occasion to enter the city of Mamestia, which was then in the possession of the Greeks. Here they met ALEXIUS, the protostrator or generalissimo of the Greek army, who was the son-in-law of the emperor MANUEL, and had come thither with the design of visiting the frontiers that belonged to the Grecian empire. On his first interview with NIERSES the Graceful, ALEXIUS was struck with admiration by the grace and learning which pervaded every part of his conversation. One day religion being the topic of their conference, ALEXIUS expressed a desire of being furnished with information as to the cause of the division of the Church of Christ into so many doctrinal opinions. The promptitude with which NIERSES answered every question that was put to him, created in ALEXIUS a deep sense of veneration for him as an erudite divine, and left no appearance of doubt in his arguments. NIERSES convinced him that the difference of opinions between the Christian Churches merely existed in words and forms, and assured him that the creed of the Armenian Church was consonant to that of the Church of Greece.

ALEXIUS desired NIERSES to commit the whole of their conversation to writing, which he promised to present to the emperor, and to exert every nerve in effecting a union between the two Churches. He also proposed to him the solution of a few important points, which from their intricate nature had created a difference of opinion between the divines of the Greek Church.

NIERSES accepted the proposition with great interest, and accordingly wrote an epistle to him full of sound doctrine and incontrovertible proofs. He commenced the latter by saying, "I was extremely delighted by the opportunity of holding a conference with you, O philanthropic and pious nobleman, respecting the doctrines and forms of the Armenian Church! But as sentiments embodied by human utterance are liable to be effaced from the tablets of memory, by the lapse of time, by reason of the cessation of our remembrance, I do not hesitate to furnish you with a written account of all that you were pleased to hear from me. I shall endeavour to perform my task with as much propriety and precision, as my time and abilities will admit of. Encouraged by the love of knowledge, with which you are distinguished, I feel no small alleviation in the execution of my difficult undertaking. It may not be perhaps superfluous to add, that all my arguments are drawn from that pure source of religious truth, for which our divine fathers of old are so deservedly characterised."

This preamble is immediately followed by an orthodox confession of the Holy Trinity, and of the incarnation of our blessed Saviour. It is here asserted, that the Church of Armenia admits the duality of nature in Christ, and that the Armenians by the term "one nature," acknowledge by implication an unconfounded union of the divinity and human nature of our Saviour. It is also added that the Armenian Church, according to old customs, commemorates the nativity of our Saviour on the 6th of January, and that it is a gross fabrication that the Armenians observe the Annunciation day on the preceding day of the Epiphany. That in consequence of a want of olives, the Armenians make preparation of unction by the oil of odorous flowers. That they pay due reverence to pictures. That in constructing crosses of wood, nails are with no other intention affixed to them than with that of joining the parts together; while those made of silver and gold are without nails. That the prayer Սուրբ ԱՅՏ, "Holy God*," is offered in the Armenian Church to Jesus Christ, and not to the Father, or the Holy Ghost. That the custom of partaking of milk, butter, and cheese, on

* About half an hour previously to the commencement of high mass, the following short prayer is addressed to the Son in the Armenian Church: Սուրբ ԱՅՏ, սուրբ և հզօր, սուրբ և անհաճ, որ խաչէցար վասն մեր, ողորմեան մեզ: "Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal; who wast crucified for us, have mercy upon us." An erroneous impression had been made on the minds of the Greeks, that this prayer was indiscriminately addressed to either of the persons of the Holy Trinity, and by this conviction, they traced a fundamental error in the doctrines of the Armenian Church.

Saturdays and Sundays during the lent, has now become obsolete amongst the Armenian people, and though it is still continued by a few of the nobility, its entire abandonment will be effected in a short time. That the custom of using pure wine, unmixed by water, in the Holy Communion, has obtained in the Armenian Church since the days of the blessed GREGORY the Illuminator. Finally, the writer explains the nature of the abdo-medal fasting, which is observed by the Armenians a few weeks before the commencement of the Lent.

ALEXIUS, on receiving from NIERSES the foregoing epistle, expressed his grateful acknowledgments for the same, and permitted him to take his departure for Lambron, after having bestowed on him every mark of honor suitable to his rank and office. NIERSES having remained in the latter place for a short time, quitted it for Hironcla, where he met his brother GREGORY, the pontiff, and related to him every particular of the communication that had passed between him and the Grecian generalissimo ALEXIUS.

On the fulfilment of the immediate object of the letter of NIERSES the Graceful, on its being put into the hands of the emperor MANUEL, and the patriarch MICHAEL, they immediately ordered it to be translated into Greek, and felt great satisfaction at the opportunity that had offered itself of effecting a union between the Greek and Armenian Churches. The perusal of the translation filled their minds with admiration of the mild spirit and rare talents of the writer, and afforded them encouragement to carry the contemplated scheme into execution. Hereupon the emperor sent a deputation to Armenia, consisting of SUMBAT and ARUKH, both of Armenian extraction, with a letter to GREGORY the pontiff, dated September, 1167, expressive of his earnest desire of seeing the consummation of the happy union which was in contemplation. In order to proceed in this undertaking with facility and success, he wished that NIERSES the Graceful should be sent to Constantinople, thinking that the presence of both parties might in a great degree be conducive to an amicable settlement of the existing differences. The following is a copy of the letter in question :

“ MANUEL COMNENUS PORPHYRIGENITUS, ever mighty and great, Augustus, emperor of Greece, and faithful king of God Jesus Christ, to his holiness Lord GREGORY, the excellent pontiff of Armenia, sendeth love and greeting. It is the imperative duty of all those, who by the medium of the baptismal font have entered into the fellowship of Christ, to have due regard for the fulfilment of divine justice, and to display special care and zeal for the advancement of love, peace, and unanimity amongst that class of people, who have Christ as the foundation of their religion. They are bound to use their unremitting endeavours to knit all the Christians with the bonds of union ; to make them followers of one shepherd, who became incarnate to save us from perdition, to bring them under

the guidance of one pastoral crook ; to cause them to ‘ lie down in green pastures ’ of orthodox faith ; to render them participators of the vital stream of wholesome doctrines, and to gather them within the pale of one Catholic Church. Elevated by Providence to the highest station that can be allotted here to a human being, I consider the duties of governing my empire less sacred, less beneficial, than those which oblige me to be instrumental in effecting an union of the Christian Churches. Impressed with this conviction, I shall, as far as time and circumstances will permit, strive to consummate an object, which involves the temporal and spiritual welfare of mankind.

“ It is not less becoming to your excellent fraternity, who have made the scriptures and the laws of God your chief studies, and rendered yourselves conversant with the orthodox doctrines of the fathers of the Church, to use your friendly and influential co-operation in securing the welfare of the inward man, by collecting from the only source of life the dews of truth and salvation. Of your desire to promote this laudable object, we have been informed by our beloved son-in-law ALEXIUS, who delivered to us a letter bearing a detailed account of the conference that had taken place between you and him concerning the contemplated union of the sister Churches. It is our intention to give due deliberation to the state of the Armenian Church, and to institute inquiries into the creed thereof. A translation of the letter of your holiness was read by us with uncommon interest, and afforded us a source of the greatest satisfaction. Assured of the moral and Christian virtues, for which your holiness is so eminently distinguished, we feel real pleasure in rendering our aid to the consummation of an object highly desirable both to God and man.

“ With this view we would propose to you to dispatch your brother NIERSES to our capital, as we are perfectly convinced that a man of his extensive information, varied knowledge, virtuous conduct, and amiable disposition, will not only be able to afford satisfaction to the Head of our Church, and the synod in general, but particularly tend to remove the difficulties which will otherwise be experienced from time and place. Let the insignificant cause of division, which subsists between the two Churches, be removed if it be within the scope of possibility ; and let not Christ, who redeemed us from eternal punishment by his precious blood, be considered a stumbling block, but the Head of the corner and the True Foundation of our faith, which unites us together in spirit. Let Christ be the centre of all our religious inquiries, the Anchor of all our spiritual aspirations, and the Director of all our ecclesiastical affairs. In him we founded our belief, to him our hearts were fixed, and by him our wounds were healed. From the Great Bestower of so many blessings you will no doubt obtain for your zeal in the sacred cause of Christianity that recompence which is reserved for the enjoyment of the elect. We have thought it necessary to depute our faithful servant SUMBAT, bearing this letter, with directions to induce you to dispatch your brother NIERSES to Constantinople. He is also authorised to give you such other information, as might have a connexion with the immediate object of his mission. You may safely credit all that will be said by him on this subject. Adieu !”

While preparations were in progress at the capital of Greece for deparatching the embassy to Armenia, the pontiff GREGORY terminated his earthly career. The Church of Syria was also at the same time

deprived of its supreme pastor, whose station was immediately filled by an able and worthy successor. News of the proposed union of the sister Churches having spread throughout the Christian countries which held a close intercourse with Armenia, the patriarch of Syria deputed two learned bishops to Hiramcla, for the purpose of taking a part in the proceedings of the council, which was shortly to be held by NIERSES the Graceful, for furthering the views of the intended union.

On the arrival of the embassy at Hiramcla, SUMBAT delivered the imperial letter to NIERSES the pontiff, communicating to him many interesting particulars on the part of the emperor, and persuading him to accompany him to Constantinople ; but the duties of his high office rendering his absence from the pontifical house indispensable at that very juncture, NIERSES sent a reply to the emperor, full of spirit and wonderful observations. As the letter itself is of great length, I shall here only give an outline of its contents :

“ I had the honor to receive the letter of your Imperial Majesty, addressed to my late lamented brother and immediate predecessor in the pontificate of Armenia. By the perusal of the inspired sentiments expressed in it by your godly Majesty, our hearts thrilled with that inexpressible delight which a person feels on recovering from the influence of sleep, and enjoying the vivifying beams of the glorious orb of day. It is gratifying to us to observe, that your Majesty is worthy of not only bearing the name of the true EMMANUEL, but also of his co-operation in ‘ breaking down the middle wall of partition *between us.*’ Endowed with these peculiar gifts of heaven, your Majesty is condescendingly pleased to accost us with a cheering voice, and propose measures for eradicating from amongst us that hatred, which has proved so baleful to the interests of Christianity, and the welfare of our country. I am so exceedingly delighted with your Majesty’s invitation, that I would, even if I were dead, like LAZARUS, arise from the grave, and obey the divine voice which summons me to your presence ; but violent disturbances abroad, and the urgent duties of my avocation at home, present insuperable barriers to my paying a visit to Constantinople. Notwithstanding these obstacles, I should still feel diffident to attempt discussing a question of so much weight in your august presence, from a conviction that the sphere of my knowledge would look like a mere drop in comparison with the vast ocean of your Majesty’s qualifications. All that were great and noble in Armenia, to our national misfortune, have now ceased to exist. The only comfort, with which we cheer our hearts in the melancholy gloom that overhangs our civil destinies, is derived from the circumstance of our Church being based on the solid foundation of Catholic faith. We place our confidence in the mercies of God, that the divine power which excited love and good-will amongst us, shall consummate a happy union between the two Churches.

“ Should your Imperial Majesty be graciously pleased to visit Armenia, for the furtherance of this desirable object, you will, by that act of condescension, display in your soul the stamp of that humility, with which the heavenly King came to the world to bestow salvation on mankind. We are sure that you will join with us in the conviction, that the lustre of glory reflected on your mighty empire by

splendid victories, and the aggrandizement of territories, will be cheerless and evanescent when contrasted with that of restoring peace to the Church of Christ, by blunting the weapons of the incorporate enemy, and suppressing envy and hatred, which like cankers have preyed on the very vitals of our spiritual existence. Our Lord Jesus Christ, viewing the baneful consequences of pride predominant in human nature, had recourse to humility as to an infallible cure of the spiritual infirmities under which mankind were labouring; and by means of his divine love and meekness, conciliated the hearts of those who were estranged from him by the infringement of his laws and ordinances. In imitation of the example set to us by our blessed Redeemer, it behoves your Imperial Majesty to make your dictatorial authority subservient to mildness and humility, in removing the cause of estrangement that exists between the two nations. As a tree which is bent to the ground is liable to be broken by a sudden and violent effort to restore it to its upright position, so a division amongst the members of Christ, rendered obstinate by time, is incapable of being removed by force. It stands in need of a long and patient application of spiritual ointment, I mean the exercise of a kind, mild, and conciliatory spirit on the part of your Imperial Majesty towards the Armenians placed under the sway of your government.

“Many of your people, to our great national misfortune, consider that the only means of conforming to the laws and justice of God, and of being worthy of inheriting the kingdom of heaven, consist in pouring upon us torrents of abuse, in destroying our Churches, in breaking our crosses, in overturning our altars, in ridiculing our religious ceremonies, and in harassing and persecuting the ministers of our Church. This unchristian animosity is carried to such a pitch, as to shame the horrid cruelties of the worst of unbelievers. Galled and persecuted by Moslem despotism, we have hitherto in vain sought protection in the sympathies of Christianity. Hence it must be inferred, that such a course of action not only fails to unite the divided, but tends to divide the united. The first effectual recipe, that can be applied to our spiritual distempers, is to make an exchange of the inveterate hatred for human love and kindness, and as a matter of consequence, to stimulate thereby the inhabitants of Armenia major to an acquiescence in the projected union. We humbly solicit your Imperial Majesty to order special prayers to be offered up in all the Churches throughout your empire, that the Almighty may be pleased to crown our undertaking with success. We have taken care that similar measures shall be adopted by our clergy in every quarter of Armenia.

“We have also particularly to request, that in case Providence assist us in discussing matters on the intended union in a general council, no mark of distinction or superiority should be observed between the Greek and the Armenian. Let no tone of authority be assumed by the former in denoting such points of the doctrines of our Church as are not accordant with those of yours, and no fault be imputed to the latter in boldly supporting the truths and dignity of their Church. Marks of distinction are only observable in the discussion of civil and temporal affairs. It is true that you claim pre-eminence in the attainment of knowledge and the exercise of earthly power; yet all those who are strengthened by the graces of regeneration in the baptismal font, are according to St. Paul ‘one in Christ Jesus.’ If, therefore, it may be pleasing to the Almighty to smile on our endeavours, and to bring our undertaking to a successful termination, we shall, in the assembly to be convened for the purpose, lay Christ

as the Rock and the Head of the corner over the two sundered walls of our Churches. Let not the subject be discussed with that fruitless and violent mode of controversy, which has hitherto been carried on by the sister Churches with detrimental consequences on both sides. Let brotherly love, unanimity, and an ardour after divine truths distinguish the whole course of the proceedings of the council. Let us, in accordance with the injunctions of St. Paul, bear one another's burden, and the infirmities of the weak, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' In laying open our spiritual distempers to the observation of one another, let each party reciprocally look for, in the other, a sympathising and confidential physician. Whatever may be beyond the reach of our penetration, let it be referred to the testimony of those whose judgment and experience have rendered them distinguished in the decision of similar questions. Able physicians do not consider their qualifications under-rated by taking medicines from the hands of their scholars, when they are labouring under the attacks of sickness. The eyes, though sharp enough in seeing the objects presented to their gaze, fall short of beholding themselves and the members of the body by which they are surrounded; and on their being attacked with soreness, they seek a cure from the eyes and hands of another. What has been stated above, will, we hope, be considered sufficiently satisfactory to your Imperial Majesty. We have communicated to you *multum in parvo*, and have desired your ambassador to furnish you with such other information, as may be thought to content the ardour of your curiosity. Adieu! Augustus Emperor! May your Majesty live long under the protection of the Almighty."

At the express desire of SUMBAT, who was at the head of the embassy, NIERSES the Graceful drew out another form of the Creed of the Armenian Church, being assured that it would tend to throw more light on the disputed points of religion, and carry conviction to the mind of every philanthropic inquirer. The contents of this letter were a clear, distinct, and comprehensive recapitulation of all that he had stated in the former one, presented to ALEXIUS, the son-in-law of the emperor. The letter commenced with the following beautiful preamble:

"It now becomes us to address ourselves to you, not with eloquence of speech, in which we are deficient, but in the truth of the spirit, in which we were instructed by those favoured with divine inspiration. We do not attempt giving colour to a schismatical darkness, by clothing our Creed with the light of orthodox faith, as we have unjustly been supposed to do by others guilty of a similar line of conduct; but what we have stored in the invisible spirit, we embody the same in visible writing, by the testimony of our minds, and the dictation of the Holy Ghost, who sees, judges and examines the utmost recesses of our hearts."

After making long and sensible observations on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and the incarnation of Jesus Christ, leaning on the incontrovertible testimonies of the Fathers of the Church, he proceeds thus:

"Concurring in the fundamental principles of the Christian religion, we believe that the word, who was made flesh according to St. JOHN, was not changed into flesh by being divested of his divine nature, but that by an unconfounded

union with body, he was actually made flesh, and continued without flesh, as he was from the beginning. We believe that there are not two persons in Christ, one with flesh and the other without flesh; but that the very Christ is both with flesh and without flesh. He was made flesh by human nature, of which he partook, and remained without flesh in divine nature, which he had from the beginning. He is both visible and invisible, perceivable and unperceivable by the touch, beginning and unbeginning in time, the Son of Man, and the Son of God, co-essential with the Father in divinity, and concomitant with us in humanity.'

After taking a comprehensive view of the mystery of the incarnation of our Saviour, he dilates on His divine and human wills, and clearly demonstrates, that the will of the humanity of Christ was always and in every respect obedient to that of his divinity :

“The human will had no ascendancy over the divine, as in us the passions very often domineer over the reason; but the divine will always exercised its dominion over the human: for the actions of the human were all guided and directed by the power and sway of the divine.

“In accordance with the doctrine of the wonderful union of the divine and human wills that exist in the person of Christ, we concur in the consistency of attributing his operations to a natural and supernatural agency. We do not ascribe his superior actions only to the divinity, unconnected with the humanity; nor his inferior acts only to the humanity, unconnected with the divinity. Were it not truly proper to connect the great with the little, how could it consistently be said that the Son of Man descended from heaven, and that God was crucified and bled on the cross? To the unconfounded union of both the divinity and humanity we attribute the divine and human operations of Christ, who sometimes as a God acted in the superior power of God, and sometimes as a man, acted in the capacity of man, as it is easily demonstrated by the whole course of his dispensations from the beginning to the close of his divine mission. He felt hunger as a man, and fed thousands with a few loaves as a God. He prayed for us and on our behalf as a man, and accepted with his Father the prayers of all his people as a God. In humanity he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and was dumb as a sheep before her shearers; but he is the Word of God, by whom the heavens were created, in his divinity. He died in human nature as a man, and raised the dead by divine power as a God. He suffered the pangs of death as a man, and conquered death by death as a God. It was not the one that died, and the other that conquered death; but it was Christ himself, who died, who lives, and who vivifies the dead. For the same Christ, being a man, and of a mortal nature, and being a God, and of an immortal nature, not dividing into two the unconfounded union of the divinity and humanity, so as to render the one untorturable and immortal, and the other susceptible of tortures and death, he suffered on the cross for the salvation of mankind with the inexplicable combination of these contrarieties, yielding in human nature to tortures and death, and in divinity, being free from pain, and immortal. He that died in human nature, was alive in divinity; he that was tortured on the cross, remained also free from the pangs of tortures; he that perspired through fear, levelled on the ground his assailants; he that was unjustly humiliated and strengthened by angels, strengthens all his creatures; he that is Creator of the universe, coequal in divinity with the Father, was born from his creature, and

partook of our nature. He is proclaimed by the preachers of the gospel to be perfect God and man, uniting in his person divinity and humanity in a manner far surpassing the union of the soul and body; for the former, being commended into the hands of the Father, was separated from the latter, but the divinity continued inseparable from both of them*."

The preceding creed is immediately followed by a detailed account of the forms and ceremonies observed in the Armenian Church, similar to that which the writer had previously drawn out at the particular request of ALEXIUS. It is concluded by the following short paragraph :

" In the perusal of our letter, wherein the creed and the observances of our Church are explained in a comprehensive style, we humbly hope that your Gracious and Imperial Majesty will not deny us the candour and sincerity with which our sentiments are embodied in writing. Let us not be suspected of parasitical subterfuges in the communication of our thoughts, and let it be remembered that we have stated in this nothing which is at variance with simple truth, and the genuine effusions of our hearts."

The motives of the writer in making this assertion were to silence the mouths of such miscreants of his nation, as had gone over to the Church of Greece, and were invidiously endeavouring to baffle the consummation of the proposed union, by rendering the doctrines and ceremonies of the Armenian Church censurable in the eyes of the Emperor and Patriarch of Constantinople.

On the return of the embassy to the Court of Greece, the letter of NIERSES was put into the hands of the emperor MANUEL, who personally presented it to the patriarch. A translation of it being read before a numerous assembly of the dignitaries of the Greek Church, they were struck with admiration at the irresistible arguments which it comprised. They were stimulated by its contents to the abandonment of the inveterate hatred which they bore towards the Armenians, and unanimously agreed in effecting the contemplated union between the two Churches. The emperor, excited by an intense desire of promoting this sacred cause, proposed to pay a visit to Armenia, accompanied by some of the learned theologians of Greece, with a view of meeting NIERSES the Graceful, and holding with him a conference on the religious differences that existed between the two nations; but he was unfortunately prevented from the fulfilment of his intention by the

* This clear, lucid and unequivocal confession of faith is enough to carry conviction to the minds of the most fastidious of our accusers, that the Church of ARMENIA is totally free from the heresies of EUTYCHES! Let it also satisfy such misinformed, misled, and misguided, writers as Mr. CHARLES MAC FARLANE, author of the *sublime* Tale of CONSTANTINOPLE, entitled "THE ARMENIANS," that *we* Armenians are not Eutychians, as he is led to believe from the misrepresentations of the Romanists.

commotions which at that time prevailed in the west. He consequently chose the alternative of deputing in May, A. D. 1170, to HIROMCLA, LEZION MASTER THEORIANEY, a Greek divine, eminently distinguished for his theological and philosophical attainments, with JOHANNES, the learned Abbot of an Armenian monastery, from Philipopolis, generally known by the appellation of UTHMAN, bearing an imperial letter addressed to the pontiff of Armenia, in these terms :—

“ It afforded us great joy to learn your willingness to effect a happy union between the sister Churches, and acquiescing in your laudable views, we have deputed learned and pious men to confer with you on our behalf, and use every means in their power to remove the wall of partition between us.”

On the arrival of the deputation at HIROMCLA, THEORIANEY and JOHANNES were kindly received by the Armenian bishops that were assembled by NIERSES the Graceful in the pontifical house, for the purpose of adopting the best mode of carrying the proposed union into execution. NIERSES, on the letter of the emperor being presented to him by THEORIANEY, shewed the latter every mark of honor and kindness, which his rank and the immediate object of his mission required. THEORIANEY had brought with him a copy of the letter of NIERSES, addressed to the emperor, with a view of obtaining an explanation on some points that appeared doubtful to them, and of satisfying their minds as to the reality of some assertions that were made by those who were inimically disposed towards the Armenian Church. To these ends an assembly of the Armenian and Greek bishops was held in HIROMCLA, who commenced discussing the important points with decorum, mildness, and moderation. THEORIANEY, in the course of perusing the letter of NIERSES to the assembly, proposed, in proper order, several questions for solution, to which NIERSES made replies, full of convincing proofs. The course of discussions comprised queries on the duality of nature and will in the person of Christ, (about which point great stress was laid on this saying of CYRILLUS : “ The incarnate Word is of one nature,” which admits of various constructions,) the exact day of the commemoration of the nativity of our Saviour, the propriety of the prayer “ Holy God,” which was offered in the Armenian Church, the preparation of the holy unction, the necessity of performing prayers within the Church, and the decrees of the council of Chalcedon. At the conclusion of the meeting, NIERSES, in his endeavours to remove an erroneous impression from the mind of THEORIANEY, that the Armenians were monophysites, cited from a work of JOHANNES the philosopher, a renowned pontiff of Armenia, several proofs corroborative of the duality of nature in Christ. “ The work in question,” said he, “ which was before imperfectly known but to a few of our nation, was afterwards unanimously adhered to by my predecessors in the ponti-

ficatē of Armenia.” The work was, at the desire of THEORIANEY, produced at the meeting, and a few passages of the same being read to him, he highly admired its wholesome doctrine. A transcript of it was accordingly made out at the request of THEORIANEY, who wished to take it to Constantinople for the inspection of the emperor and patriarch. The proceedings of this council were committed to writing by THEORIANEY, as it appears from the panegyric written by NIERSES LAMBRONENSIS ON NIERSES the Graceful. THEORIANEY’s account of this meeting was, in the year 1578, published in Greek and Latin, in conjunction with the records of the fathers of the Church.

Before the mission had quitted Constantinople for Hiromcla, the emperor MANUEL communicated to MICHAEL, the patriarch of Syria, his intention of acceding to an union of the Greek and Armenian Churches. THEORIANEY, on his arrival at Hiromcla, wrote to MICHAEL, soliciting his presence at the Council of union which was shortly to be held in the pontifical house of Armenia. The latter deputed a proxy in the person of JOHANNES, bishop of Cheson, who, reaching Hiromcla after the meeting had terminated, felt great displeasure at the acquiescence of NIERSES the Graceful in the doctrines of the Greek Church, and began to censure him, as the representative of his patriarch, for such a line of conduct. NIERSES, by sensible observations, convinced him of the propriety and necessity of the union, and desired him that on his return to Syria he should use every means in his power to secure the consent of MICHAEL to the removal of the religious differences which had for ages disturbed the peace of the sister Churches.

On the departure of THEORIANEY for Constantinople in October in the year 1170, NIERSES addressed a letter to the emperor, of which the following is an outline.

“In delivering your Imperial letter to us, THEORIANEY assured us of the love and good-will, which you are graciously pleased to exercise in increasing the spiritual and temporal welfare of our nation. The proposal of effecting this happy union between the two Churches could proceed from no other source, than from a mind gifted with the choicest blessings of heaven, and entirely devoted to the service of its Creator. Enriched with every thing that is great and good, you burn with the desire of becoming a partaker of our spiritual poverty. On a conference held between us and the learned divines, whom your Majesty was pleased to depute, the veil of the unjust aspersions with which the two nations were covered, was rent asunder. By the collision of contrary opinions, the truth, which was surrounded with a mist of falsehood, burst to light, and shone with redoubled splendour. The result of the council of union is conducive to carrying conviction to the mind of every reasonable being, that the Greeks are free from the heresy of the Nestorian* division, and that the

* For the Nestorian heresies, see EUSEBIUS’S Ecclesiastical history, tom. iii. pp. 256 and 257.

Armenians are also free from that of the Eutychian* confusion. Concurring in the fundamental principles of religion, the Armenians and Greeks are united together by the grace of God in the similarity of the creed of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. Fixed in the determination of our happy union, I shall address all our bishops residing in different quarters of Armenia, and ask their consent to some important points proposed by you for our acceptance, lest by their being excluded from taking a part in the furtherance of this desirable object, the result of our endeavours may prove contrary to our sanguine expectations. I have also, conformably with the desire of THEORIANEY, furnished him with another letter descriptive of the confession of our Church."

In this letter, after treating of the incarnation of our Saviour, in accordance with the tenor of his former one, he adds, that it is consistent with the orthodox faith to admit duality of nature in Christ, by reason of his perfect divinity and perfect humanity; that the Armenians, by attributing one nature to the incarnate word, on the authority of CYRILLUS, confess an unconfounded and indivisible combination of the divine with the human nature; and that the Church of Armenia anathematizes those who, in the sense of the heretical doctrine of EUTYCHES, may confessedly ascribe one nature to Christ.

On the return of THEORIANEY and JOHANNES UTHMAN to Constantinople, they felt great satisfaction in presenting to the emperor the letter of NIERSES, together with an account of the proceedings of the council. The perusal of these interesting documents afforded the greatest delight to the emperor, the patriarch, and the other dignitaries of the Greek Church. Their joy at the favourable prospect of their undertaking could only be increased by a sense of veneration, with which they were impressed on their being informed by THEORIANEY of the piety, mildness, and pleasant address of NIERSES the Graceful. The fame of the amiable qualities of the pontiff of Armenia rivetted the hearts of the Greeks to the cause of the sacred union, and made them exclaim with admiration, "Behold the wise course pursued by the pontiff of Armenia, and consider the orthodox creed followed by himself and the whole of his congregation! Thanks to Heaven, that in these

* The heresies of EUTYCHES are thus alluded to by EUSEBIUS in his Ecclesiastical History :

Ὡς δ' οὖν κληθεὶς Εὐτυχῆς οὐκ ἐλήλυθε· τὰ δὲ, καὶ παραγενόμενος ἔαλω. εἰρήκει γὰρ, ὁμολογῶ ἐκ δύο φύσεων γεγενῆσθαι τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν πρὸ τῆς ἐνώσεως· μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἐνωσιν, μίαν φύσιν ὁμολογῶ. ὅς οὐδὲ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Κυρίου ὁμοούσιον ἡμῖν ἔλεγεν εἶναι· καθαιρεῖται μὲν.

EUTYCHES igitur, cum ad synodum vocatus non venisset, ac deinde coram convictus esset hæc dixisse : Fateor Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, ante unionem quidem duas habuisse naturas : Post unionem vero unam duntaxat naturam confiteor. Sed et corpus Domini negabat ejusdem esse substantiæ cujus sunt nostra : depositus est.—*Eusebii Ecclesiast. Histor. tom. iii. p. 261.*

days of degeneracy we see a pastor of the Church adorned with so many Christian and moral virtues !' The hatred which the Greeks manifested towards the Armenians gradually began to abate, and a sort of generous sympathy was felt by the former, for the lamentable degradation to which the latter were reduced in a political point of view. They could not, however, reconcile themselves to the idea, that the Armenians, after conforming to the fundamental principles of orthodox faith, and admitting duality of nature in our Saviour, should still persist in asserting one nature in the union of his divinity and humanity. Though the arguments, with which the Armenians endeavoured to clear their minds on this subject, were perfectly sound and correct, yet the Greeks could not overcome their reluctance to make such concessions to them, and were consequently anxious that this obstacle to their union, together with a few others of minor importance, originating from certain observances of the Armenian Church, might prudently and speedily be removed.

Hereupon the emperor came to the determination of sending another embassy to Hiramcla, consisting of the abovementioned THEORIANEY and JOHANNES UTHMAN, who were furnished with letters from the emperor and patriarch MICHAEL, bearing date December, 1172, and instructed to urge NIERSES to apply himself with increased interest and assiduity to the fulfilment of the object in view, lest the death of either of them might put a stop to the successful termination of their undertaking. Nine points connected with the creed of the Church of Greece were distinctly stated in the imperial letter, for the consideration and subsequent acceptance of the Armenians. It was also proposed by the emperor, that those points, but particularly that of the duality of nature in Christ, should be discussed, and admitted by the Armenians in a general council to be held for that purpose. Should they, however, be reluctant in conceding to some of the points alluded to, they might communicate their objections in a letter addressed by their pontiff to the emperor. The proposed points are the following :

I. Anathematize those who admitted one nature in Christ, that is to say, EUTYCHES, DEOSCORUS, SEVERIUS, TIMOTHEUS, and the followers of their heresies.

II. Confess in our Lord Jesus Christ, one Son, one person, one hypostasis formed of two perfect natures, which are inseparable, indivisible, unchangeable, unalterable, unconfounded ; so as not to consider Christ in a separate sense the Son of God and the Son of the holy Deiparous, but to acknowledge in him unconfusedly the Son of God and the Son of Man, and to confess him to be both God and Man in the duality of his nature. Confess in him the duality of actions and

natural will, both divine and human, not resisting each other, but the human will following and obeying the divine. III. The prayer "Holy God" should be offered in your Church by the omission of "*who wast crucified for us,*" and the conjunction "*and.*" IV. You should conform to the Church of Greece in commemorating the feasts, that is to say, the Annunciation day, on the 25th of March; the Nativity, on the 25th of December; the Circumcision, on the eighth day after the birth of Christ, to wit, on the 1st of January; the Baptism on the 6th of January; the Presentation of our Saviour to the temple on the fortieth day after his birth on the 2nd of February, and in like manner, agreeing with us in observing all the dominical feasts, as well as those of the holy Virgin MARY, of St. JOHN, of the Apostles and of others. V. The preparation of the unction should be made of the oil of the fruit of trees. VI. The Communion Service should be performed with leavened bread, and wine mixed with water. VII. Let Armenian Christians, both clergy and laity, remain within the Church, during the hours of prayer and the performance of communion service, with the exception of public penitents, who are prohibited by ecclesiastical canons from staying in the midst of the Church during the time. VIII. You should accept the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh general assemblies. IX. The choice of the nomination of your pontiff should be vested only in the emperor of the Greeks.

On the arrival of the embassy at Hiromela, THEORIANEY and JOHANNES UTHMAN met with a very kind reception from NIERSES the Graceful, who having respectfully received the letters of the emperor and patriarch of Constantinople, communicated the contents of them to the principal bishops and friars of the Armenian Church, who had repaired to Hiromela from the mountains of Taurus and the frontiers of Mesopotamia. Though they were easily persuaded to concede to the chief points proposed by the Greeks, yet great difficulty existed in obtaining the consent thereto of other Armenian bishops, whose number amounted to upwards of three hundred, and who were living in different distant quarters, especially in the frontiers of Armenia major, save the body of monks who resided in monasteries, and who were almost of an equal number. Consequently, NIERSES thought it necessary to summon these worthies to the general meeting which was shortly to be convened for taking into consideration the points proposed by the authorities of Greece, and communicating the result of the assembly in a suitable letter to the emperor. He conceived the unanimous voice of all the principal dignitaries of the Church of Armenia indispensably necessary in the adoption of the points, which were the connecting links of the sister Churches, lest, he

feared, an unfortunate division might be created amongst the Armenian ecclesiastics, and the result of their undertaking be attended with lamentable detriment.

The ambassadors of the court of Constantinople applauded the wise precautions which marked every act of the pontiff of Armenia, but seeing that the council could not possibly be held before the setting in of the summer, they determined to depart from Hiromcla. NIERSES, in conjunction with THEORIANEY, addressed letters to MICHAEL, the patriarch of the Syrian Church, communicating to him the points which were proposed by the Greeks for their acceptance, and soliciting the favour of his presence in the council that was shortly to be held at Hiromcla for that purpose. MICHAEL being prevented by his various avocations from going to Hiromcla, sent in his room the friar THEODORUS, who was eminently distinguished for his profound learning and conversancy with the Syrian, Greek, Armenian, and Turkish languages. On the arrival of the latter at Hiromcla, he was received by NIERSES with every kind of respect due to his rank. A discussion arose between them on the import of the words "substance" and "nature," which, according to the doctrine of *Aristotle*, admitted of various constructions. THEODORUS, widely differing from the sentiments expressed by NIERSES on this subject, immediately took his departure from Hiromcla. In the mean while, THEORIANEY and JOHANNES UTHMAN returned to Constantinople, furnished with letters addressed by NIERSES to the emperor MANUEL and the patriarch MICHAEL. NIERSES promised them to convene a general council for the decision of the question of the intended union, and to endeavour to make the concessions they required. "I shall assiduously try," says he, "to overcome the long received customs of my countrymen, which prevail on them with the power of a second nature, and to force them to an acquiescence in such of the points proposed in your letters, as may possibly be reconciled to their minds. In so doing, we shall only be actuated by a desire of promoting divine love and peace amongst us, but not by an idea of turning from errors into truth. The acceptance of the rest of the points either must be overlooked by you, or left to time, and the happy union which shall shortly be effected amongst us."

Immediately after this, NIERSES addressed letters to all the Armenian bishops, abbots, and friars residing in different quarters of Armenia, Syria, Aluans, Georgia and Persia, communicating to them all that had passed respecting the union of the sister Churches. He also desired them to pray to the Almighty for the consummation of the laudable object in view, and to take an early opportunity of going to Hiromcla for the purpose of being present in the council that was

shortly to be convened. Moreover he deputed one friar STEPHEN with a letter, inviting the Armenian clergy of Ani and Haghbat to the proposed assembly.

But alas ! how often human endeavours and expectations are frustrated before they have attained to maturity ! On the lapse of a few months, while NIERSES was engaged in preparations for holding the council of union, his earthly career was by the inscrutable dispensation of God terminated, *Anno Domini* 1173, in the seventy-third year of his age. He enjoyed the supreme dignity of a pontiff for seven years, and in that period ordained only seven bishops. His remains lay in state for several days, during which time numbers of Armenians thronged to the pontifical house with a desire of kissing the hand of the deceased. Among those who had assembled there to pay their last tribute of veneration to the virtues of the deceased pontiff of Armenia, were NIERSES LAMBONENSIS and several bishops and friars of distinction.

This melancholy event plunged the nation into the greatest distress, for they had lost in NIERSES the Graceful a vigilant pastor, a kind father, a faithful friend, a gifted divine, and a most zealous advocate of the truth of Christianity. GREGORY BASIL, the nephew of the deceased pontiff, who was living at a great distance from Hiromcla, on hearing of the dangerous illness of the latter, immediately repaired thither to see his uncle ere he breathed his last. On his arrival at that place, he found NIERSES dead. He evinced the greatest sorrow at the lamentable catastrophe which had fallen on his family and the nation in general. The funeral of the deceased pontiff was performed with the greatest pomp and honors, that his rank and exalted station deserved, being attended by almost all the dignitaries of the Armenian Church, the nobility and other distinguished members of the nation, whose heartfelt sorrow, at the irreparable loss which the Church and the state had sustained, could distinctly be read in the melancholy expressions of their downcast countenances. His remains were deposited in a sepulchre which was dug near that of his brother GREGORY, and a very splendid mausoleum was afterwards raised over him, bearing upon it a suitable inscription commemorative of his moral and Christian virtues.

News of this melancholy event reaching Constantinople, filled the heart of the emperor with the most poignant grief, and spread general regret throughout the Greek empire, every Greek sympathising with the Armenians for the loss which they had sustained in the person of their gifted pontiff. When his grief had comparatively subsided, the emperor wrote a letter of condolence to GREGORY BASIL, who had by

the unanimous voice of the nation succeeded his uncle in the government of the Church of Armenia. The progress of the religious union of the two nations, which was unfortunately impeded by the Church of Armenia's being deprived of its head, was renewed by the communications of the emperor with the pontiff GREGORY, who, emulating the laudable example of his immediate predecessor, manifested equal zeal and inclination in the restoration of peace to the bosom of the Church of Christ. Before, however, the question of the long wished-for union was happily decided, Greece was deprived of her most illustrious, pious, and virtuous ruler, in the year of our Lord 1180, which melancholy catastrophe proved a death-blow to the nearly-finished structure of peace, and blasted in the bosoms of every Armenian and Greek the hopes of their future union!

II.—*Discovery of Buddhist Images with Deva-nágarí Inscriptions at Tagoung, the Ancient Capital of the Burmese Empire. By Colonel H. BURNEY, Resident at Ava.*

[Read before the Society, 6th April, 1836.]

I have the pleasure to forward to you a couple of images of GAUDAMA in *Terracotta*, which Captain HANNAY has just sent down to me from *Tagoung*. On both there is an inscription, apparently in the same old Deva-nágarí character, as in the inscription No. 2, of the Allahabad column, and probably consisting of the same words as those on the image of Buddha found in Tirhut, and in the other ancient inscriptions described in No. 39 of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society**.

Tagoung, written *Takoung*, (or according to Sir W. JONES'S system, *Takaung*, but pronounced by the Burmese *Tagoung*;) you will find placed in our maps a little above the 23rd degree of north latitude, and on the eastern or left bank of the *Erawadi* river. Captain HANNAY, however, has ascertained its latitude by an observation of the sun to be 23° 30' N., and several Burmese itineraries in my possession make its distance from Ava 52 *taings*, or about 100 miles. The Burmese consider *Tagoung* to have been the original seat of their empire, and the site of an ancient city, which was founded before the time of GAUDAMA, by a colony that emigrated from Central India. Some faint remains of an old city are still to be seen on this spot, where among the ruins of some pagodas, Captain HANNAY found the images I now send you. No one here can decypher the character of the inscriptions, but on showing to some of the learned, the account

* This is precisely the case:—even to the form of the letters—the dialect however seems to be *Magadhí* or *Páli*, *dhammá* and *pabhavá* for *dharmá* and *prabhavá*, &c. See the accompanying plate.—ED.